

SARL NEWS SUNDAY 27 JANUARY 2008

You are listening to ZS6SRL the official Radio Station of the South African Radio League, the National Body for Amateur Radio in South Africa, with a news bulletin that is transmitted every Sunday at 08:15 CAT in Afrikaans and at 08:30 CAT in English. To listen to a web stream or Echolink by ZS6FCS visit www.sarl.org.za, click on ARMI and follow the links for details.

You can download this and previous bulletins from www.sarl.org.za and you can also subscribe there to receive future bulletins by email.

Your newsreader this morning is Hans, ZS6KR, on 145,725 and 7,066 MHz from Pretoria with relays on 28,325, 14,235, 10,130, 7,066 and 3,695 MHz SSB as well as 51,400, 438,825 and 1 296 MHz FM in the Pretoria area. (Other newsreaders please change to suit).

SILENT KEYS

It is with regret that we have to announce that the keys of twom radio amateurs became silent recently. They were:

ZS1IV, Walter Henry Kasner on the 13 January 2008 after a brief illness.

ZS5FA, Jack Ekob, no further details are available.

Our sincerest condolences to the relatives and friends of the deceased.

(PAUSE)

In the news today:

LICENSE FEE NOTICE PROBLEMS

PRESIDENT S NET AND INTECNET THIS SUNDAY

WESTERN CAPE RTA PROMISES TO BE A KNOCK-OUT

AO-16 SATELLITE SERVES AS VOICE REPEATER

You are listening to ZS6SRL. Stay tuned for more detail on these and other important and interesting news items.

LICENSE FEE NOTICE PROBLEMS

ICASA in a communication with the SARL confirmed that there have been problems with the mailing of license renewal notices. The accounts were printed at the beginning of December but the mailing house that ICASA uses did not mail the accounts before they closed for the holiday period. According to ICASA the accounts were mailed two weeks ago which leave little margin to meet the payment cut-off date of 31 January. Radio Amateurs are advised to pay the account as soon as they receive the invoice.

PRESIDENT S NET AND INTECNET THIS SUNDAY

The first President's net of 2008 will be on the air this Sunday, 27 January at 19:00 CAT followed by the INTECNET at 20:00.

The School of Physics at the University of the Witwatersrand is working on various radio telescope projects as part of their student programme. A joint project funded by the University is in the planning stages. The project will provide interesting activity for radio amateurs interested in Astronomy.

Join Tony Voorvelt, ZS6CCD, on Sunday 27 January 2008 at 20:00 for an interesting discussion on what is envisaged and how radio amateurs can participate at various levels.

The SARL President's Net and INTECNET are streamed on the web and are available on Echolink. Various repeaters around South Africa are also linked.

WESTERN CAPE RTA PROMISES TO BE A KNOCK-OUT

The SARL RTA, Radio Technology in Action day in the Western Cape promises to be a knock out with exciting presentations on several technologies that will enhance Amateur Radio. The RTA comes to Cape Town on Saturday 8 March 2008 at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Engineering Block on the Cape Campus in Tenant Road.

Setting the scene for the day will be a panel discussion which will look at where Amateur radio is going in the next 5 years. This will be followed by a presentation on Spread Spectrum, WiFi for amateur radio, Space Weather and HF propagation for Amateur Radio. On the practical side there are papers on APRS on HF, How to build a Power Supply from scrap, to mention some.

The SARL objective with the RTA is to give radio amateurs and electronic hobbyists an insight into the new technologies that will drive amateur radio of the future. While some of the titles may sound intimidating, the presentations are at a practical level for the enjoyment of all who are attending.

The programme will be available on the SARL web from next week. Make a note of the date now 8 March 2008.

BEACON COMPETITION ENDS ON THURSDAY

The competition will end on Thursday 31 January. Three of the beacons ZS6SRL, ZS1HMO and ZS2LAW are transmitting a special message. Decode the Morse messages and send reports to bcn@sarl.org.za. There are three Short-wave DX handbooks to be won and one 2007 ARRL Handbook. The competition will be in four sections, one section for each beacon and an overall section for all three beacons. On 1 February a winner will be selected for each section. If you have entered all three sections you will automatically take part in the draw for the 2007 ARRL handbook.

How to enter: Listen on 7 023 kHz to each of the participating beacons and decode the message sent in Morse code. Mail your message to bcn@sarl.org.za in the following format: beacon call sign, date and time followed by the message,

signal report, your callsign or name if you are not licensed, QTH where you received the beacon signal and full postal address. Only send one beacon report per email. For the period of the competition, the three participating beacons will transmit more frequently. A schedule can be found on www.sarl.org.za, click on services and select Beacon Project.

AO-16 SATELLITE SERVES AS VOICE REPEATER

Launched in January 1990, AMSAT-OSCAR 16 (AO-16) – a digital satellite – has been unavailable for use while the command team dealt with a serious computer problem. The satellite has since been recovered, and is now a voice repeater, at least for an unspecified “test period” using FM voice on the uplink, but SSB voice on the downlink.

Since AO-16 was recovered approximately six months ago, the command attempted to reload the satellite software almost a dozen times without success. The team performed a series of memory tests that pointed toward a hardware failure that prevented the spacecraft software from restarting successfully.

AMSAT Vice President of Operations Drew Glasbrenner, KO4MA, said, “After concluding that the spacecraft computer system was damaged, and as discussions about decommissioning were taking place, Jim recalled a series of low-level commands that Tom Clark, K3IO, included in the spacecraft design during construction. One of these commands allows an uplink receiver to be directly tied to a downlink transmitter. The twist is that the uplink is regular FM, but the downlink via the BPSK transmitter is DSB (Double Sideband). Mark placed the satellite in this mode early this week and did some testing”.

Glasbrenner also said the satellite hears very well; the reduced bandwidth by using either USB or LSB on the ground station receiver “allows for a very robust downlink”. Tuning the downlink is just like on a linear transponder, meaning it is tight and with fast Doppler. Uplink tuning is not required, just as with the FM mode V/U satellites. The uplink is 145,920 MHz FM, and the downlink is 437,026 MHz SSB +/- Doppler shift. Please submit reports via e-mail at, ao16@amsat.org. “Enjoy this bird’s new life!” Glasbrenner said.

CLUB NEWS

The Bloemfontein Radio Amateur Club will be holding a Flea Market and Bring & Braai on Saturday 2 February at The Shack, AFB Bloemfontein. Activities start at 12:00 CAT. Contact Dennis, ZS4BS, at 082 770 9126 for more information.

EAST RAND RADIO CLUB FLEA MARKET

You are invited to the East Rand Flea Market on 2 February 2008 at the East Rand Radio Club in Springs, starting at 09:00 and running till about 12:00.

Tables are available, and there will be lots to eat and drink and they even have chairs. Join them under the palm trees. They are QRV on 145,675, the East Rand Repeater.

PROPAGATION REPORT

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZ,P reports that the expected solar activity will be very low. The geomagnetic field is expected to be quiet rising to unsettled levels on 1 till 4 February. The expected Effective Sun Spot number for the coming week will be less than 5. DX conditions will generally be good on the North-East and the North-West paths and poor in the general Northerly directions.

15 m and 20 m will provide best opportunities for DX. There is a possibility of 15 and 20 m openings towards India from about 14:00 CAT. There may be short, weak 20 m openings to Australia from 07:00. From 17:00 there may be short, weak 20 m openings towards Europe. From 18:00 there may be weak 15, 20 and 80 m openings towards the USA.

10 MHz is looking very promising after dark for the CW and digital enthusiasts.

Locally conditions on 40 m is going to be good during the day. 30 m may perform well over the longer distances. 80 m is the frequency of choice in the evenings, thunderstorms and static permitting!

Remember that this is only a prediction and that HF always has the capability to surprise you. Who knows, maybe the new year is going to provide bags full of contacts for you, but you will never know unless you switch your rig on, listen and also call CQ.

Please visit www.spaceweather.co.za for further information.

DIARY OF EVENTS

27 January, tonight President s Net and Intechnet; 31 January SARL-HMO competition closes; 31 January Closing date for enrolments for Kempton Park Class B RAE; 2 February Flea markets in Bloemfontein and Springs; 9 and 10 February SARL HF Field Day; 16 February Closing date for nominations for SARL awards; 8 March RTA in Cape Town.

SARL News invites clubs and individuals to submit news stories of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners. Submit news stories if possible in both English and Afrikaans to www.sarl.org.za/newsinbox.asp not later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

The SARL also invites you to listen to the programme Amateur Radio Mirror International, on the air every Sunday morning at 10:00 CAT on 145,750 MHz in the Pretoria area with relays on 7 082, 7 205 and 17 590 kHz. For the web stream and Echolink by ZS6FCS visit www.sarl.org.za, click on ARMI and follow the links. A repeat transmission can be heard Mondays at 21:00 CAT on 3 215 kHz. Sentech sponsors the ARMI transmissions on the non-amateur frequencies.

Today's South African Radio League news bulletin was compiled by George, ZS6NE.

Thank you for listening. 73.

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